DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 461 279 FL 024 992

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TITLE Revising Strategies of ESL and Native English Speaking Students Writing in a Collaborative Computer Networked Environment: A Multiple Case Study.
PUB DATE 1996-04-00
NOTE 16p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research (143)
EDRS PRICE EDRS Price MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Case Studies; Comparative Analysis; Computer Assisted Instruction; Computer Networks; *Computer Uses in Education; Cooperation; *English (Second Language); Higher Education; Introductory Courses; Native Speakers; Peer Evaluation; *Peer Teaching; *Revision (Written Composition); *Writing Instruction; *Writing Strategies

ABSTRACT

This study investigated the strategies used by three students in each of two college-level online writing classes, first-year composition for native speakers of English (NS) and first-year composition for speakers of English as a Second Language (ESL). Every paper written and reviewed with fellow students, every draft, and every peer critique was analyzed for revising patterns and comments. This report compares the patterns of NS and ESL students, both individually and as groups. Analysis focuses on percentage of revised T-units from first to second draft, increase in T-units, increase in words, comment types (suggestion, statement, question, punctuation, spelling, grammar, request for details) and text operations (add, delete, replace, remove) related to revisions, level of revision, and whether the revision was in response, obliquely in response, or not in response to peer comments. Results indicate that the ESL students had more revised T-units, increased words, and increased words per T-unit. They also made no revisions based on peer comments that were corrective in nature, while NS students responded to a greater variety of peer comment types. Overall, the two groups were more similar than expected. Implications for classroom practice are discussed briefly. (MSE)

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ED 461 279

Revising Strategies of ESL and Native English Speaking Students Writing in a Collaborative Computer Networked Environment: A Multiple Case Study

Steven Singer

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On Line Revision Study

INTRO/BACKGROUND

During the course of one semester, data was collected on six students in two different on-line writing classes. Three students from an Eng 100 (First Year Composition) and ESL 100(First Year Composition for speakers of English as a Second Language) participated in the study. Every paper they wrote and workshopped with their fellow classmates, every draft, and every peer critique was collected in a totally unobtrusive method on a weekly basis.

Revisions and comments were codified according to type, level, method, size, function. Each subject's revising patterns were analyzed and described to clarify the nature of revision for each student. These individual case studies can be found in the earlier chapters of the study.

OVERVIEW

The primary purpose of this part of the study is to show where the ESL students and native English speaking students converge or diverge in their revision patterns. To do so, individual and group patterns from each group will be examined and analyzed. However, because it is readily admitted that the data for this study might look very different if other subjects had been used, it is difficult to generalize these results beyond the specific subjects from whom they were derived.

Subject revision performance percentages of the various indicators will be presented. That is, individual student patterns, as well as group patterns, will be compared. The analysis of T-units and words will be presented here in chart form for ease of comparison. Similarities, differences, aberrations, and so on will be noted and discussed.

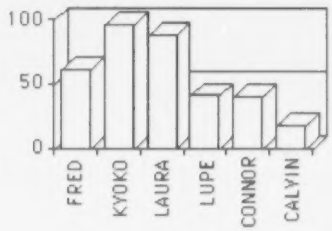
Later, aggregate data on *Peer Comment Types* will be examined for similarities or differences in the types of comments subjects tended to respond to. Next, data on *Peer Comment* sources and *Levels of Revision,* will be proffered here in aggregate format only. This will be followed by a fairly detailed comparison of the various *Text Operations, Levels of Revision,* and whether they were *In Response To Peer Comments* or *Not.*

REVISING PATTERNS

Because of the differences in the number of assignments for which data were collected and in the number of peer comments subjects received, all data presented in this chapter, which seeks to make some type of comparison, will be in percentages. Although in general it seemed to be the fairest way of comparing the various data sets, sometimes, because of the small size of data sets, the comparisons may be misleading. Every effort will be made to note these instances when they arise. Comparisons are made at face value; no attempt is made to statistically determine their significance.

An examination of subjects' tendency to revise T-units from draft #1 to #2 (see Figures 6.1 & 6.2) shows a remarkable difference between the ESL 100 students (Fred, Kyoko, and Laura) and the Eng 100 students (Lupe, Connor, and Calvin). The ESL 100 students consistently revised more than the Eng 100 students. Fred revised 61% of his T-units in Draft #1, Kyoko revised a startling 96%, and Laura revised 88% (Figure 6.1) for an average of 82% for the ESL 100 students (Figure 6.2). The Eng 100 students, on the other hand, revised considerably less. Lupe revised 41% of her T-units,

Connor revised 40%, while Calvin revised a spartan 18% (Figure 6.1) for an average of 31% for the Eng 100 students (Figure 6.2).



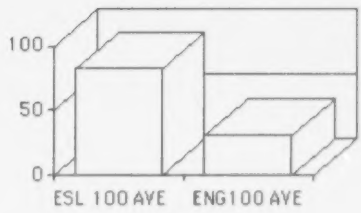
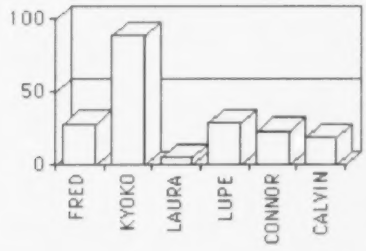


Figure 6.1 Revised T-unit Percentages	Figure 6.2 Aggregate Revised T-unit Percentages

This would seem to indicate that the ESL 100 students manifested a greater propensity to engage in the positive writing process activity of revision. However, as we shall see later, this doesn't necessarily say anything about the level of their revising. Much of this revising is, indeed, little more than editing.

The near identical increases of 24% for the ESL 100 group and 23% for the Eng 100 group would seem to indicate there is no significant difference between the two groups in terms of the increase in text from first to second drafts (see Figure 6.4). However, because of Kyoko's aberrant data, it is difficult to say.



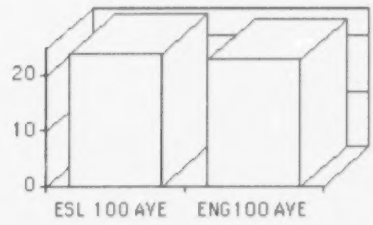
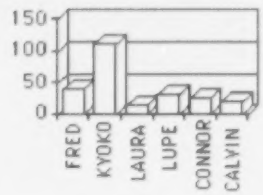


Figure 6.3 Increase In T-units Percentages	Figure 6.4 Aggregate Increase In T-units Percentages

The ESL 100 students exhibited the greatest range in increased text. Laura's data showed her increasing her T-units only 5% (Figure 6.3) while Kyoko's data show her increasing the number of her T-units a full 89% (Figure 6.3). Fred, always the middle-of-the-roader, increased his T-units 28% (Figure 6.3), quite close to the group average of 24% (Figure 6.4). The Eng 100 students were, however, much more consistent. Lupe increased the number of her T-units 29%, Connor increased his 23%, and Calvin increased his 19% (Figure 6.3) for an average of 23% (Figure 6.4).

However, an examination of subjects' *Increase in Words* patterns (Figures 6.5 & 6.6) shows a slightly different picture. Here, we once again see the aberration of Kyoko's data (as in Figures 6.1 & 6.2 where Kyoko exhibited a greater tendency to revise her T-units). She more than doubled the number of words she used from Draft #1 to #2; she increased her word count a full 112% (Figure 6.5). Laura,

once again, was at the bottom of the increases with a meager 15% increase (Figure 6.5). And Fred once again came close to the group average of 37% (Figure 6.6) by increasing his words 39% (Figure 6.5).



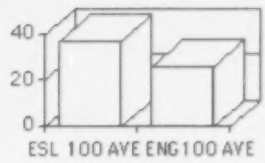
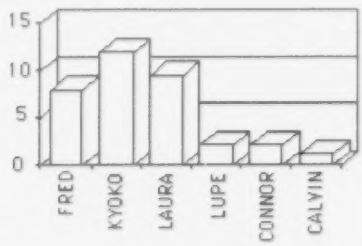


Figure 6.5 Increase In Words Percentages	Figure 6.6 Aggregate Increase In Words Percentages

Again, the Eng 100 students were much more consistent in their patterns. Lupe increased her words 31% (Figure 6.5) while Connor and Calvin increased theirs 26% and 20% (Figure 6.5), respectively, for an average of 26% (Figure 6.6). Therefore, the end results show a full 11% difference in their increases (37%-ESL and 26%-Eng). However, because of Kyoko's considerably different pattern, it is difficult to conclude whether there is any significant difference between the two groups on this item.

However, an examination of the data on the *Increase of Words/T-unit* (Figures 6.7 & 6.8) would seem to show a significant difference between the two groups. Again, because of the differing amounts of data and initial T-unit lengths for each subject, all data in this section are presented in percentage increases. All three of the ESL 100 subjects increased their T-unit length considerably. Fred increased the length of his T-units an average of 7.9% (Figure 6.7), Kyoko, again higher than any other, increased her T-Unit length 12% (Figure 6.7), nothing greatly beyond her classmates; Laura increased her T-unit length 9.5% (Figure 6.7), near the group average of 10% (Figure 6.8).



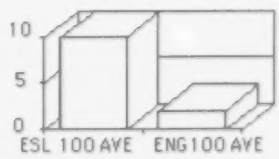


Figure 6.7 Percentage Increase In Words/T-unit	Figure 6.8 Aggregate Percentage Increase In Words/T-unit

The Eng 100 students increased their T-unit lengths considerably less. Both Lupe and Connor increased their *Words/T-unit* ratio an average of 2% (Figure 6.7). Calvin increased his less than 1% (Figure 6.7). When combined, their numbers average out to 2% (Figure 6.8). This is significantly less than the 10% increase averaged by the ESL 100 students (Figure 6.8). This would seem to indicate that the ESL 100 students probably increase the complexity of their writing from draft #1 to #2, much more than the Eng 100 students.

COMMENT TYPES AND TEXT OPERATIONS RELATED TO REVISIONS

This section of the chapter will examine *Peer Comment Types*, the *Text Operations* the subjects utilized in revising their drafts (*Add, Delete, Replace* and *Move*), the *Level of Revision* (as defined by Faigley and Witte and described earlier), and whether the revisions were *In Response, Obliquely In Response, or Not In Response To Peer Comments.* While the data are the same as that presented in earlier chapters, the later figures (6.23--6.26) combine the data in slightly different ways. Some of the results may be questionable, some surprising, some not.

An examination of Figures 6.9 and 6.10, aggregate percentages of *Peer Comment Types* in the ESL 100 and Eng 100 sections, respectively, yields little new information. Because it was logistically impossible to collect and codify all comments, irrespective of their influence or lack thereof, into any kind of meaningful format, this discussion is, by necessity, limited in its scope. These data are only those that corresponded to observable revisions. As mentioned in Chapters 4 & 5, comments that were either too vague in nature or in reference were not included in this study. As a result, both the data set and their implied results are limited in their generalizibility beyond the subjects of this study. That is, these results could benefit from confirmation from other studies.

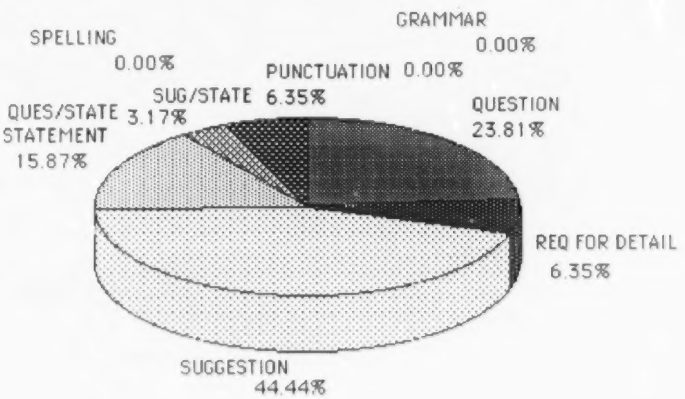


Figure 6.9
ESL 100
Peer Comment Types

Given that disclaimer, there would seem to be only a couple of mildly interesting differences between the two groups *Peer Comment Types.* First, the ESL 100 subjects seemed to respond more to *Suggestions* and *Questions* than did the Eng 100 subjects: 44% and 23.81% to 32.86% and 17.1% respectively (see Figures 6.9 & 6.10). Second and more importantly, surprisingly none of the ESL 100 students revised *In Response* to any corrective comments made by their peers. That is, there were no *Grammar, Spelling,* or *Punctuation* corrections made by peers that anyone took to heart. This would seem to fly in the face of most contemporary classroom observations that claim ESL students make primarily local edit corrections rather than meaningful changes to their texts. Hheart. This would seem to fly in the face of most contemporary classroom observations that claim ESL students make primarily local edit correc*Formal* or *Meaning-preserving Level.* However, what this absence of revisions *In Response To Peer Comments* that were coded *Grammar, Spelling, or Punctuation*

Correcting most probably indicates was a lack of confidence these students had in each other's ability to correct their papers. That is, they didn't trust each other's corrective comments. However, they did seem to respond to *Suggestions* and *Questions* that were more organizational or content oriented.

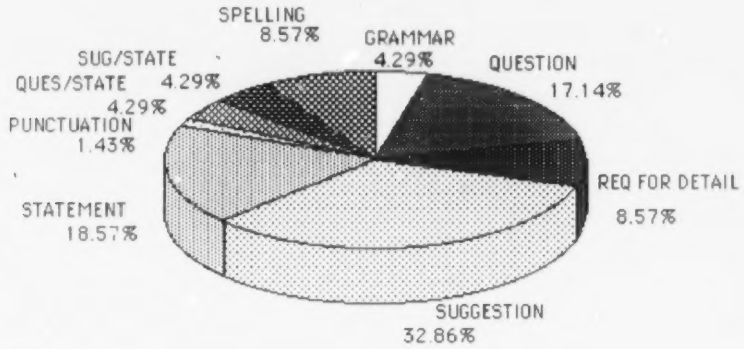


Figure 6.10
Eng 100
Peer Comment Types

Although there were hypothetically four different methods in which peers could provide feedback, only two of them were responded to to an extent that would bear mention: *Intertextual* and ***Descant Prompted.*** The other two methods, *Posttextual* and *End-Of-Paper,* were responded to only five times among all six subjects. Therefore, the data for these two were not included here or in earlier analyses. Furthermore, the *Intertextual* and ***Descant*** *Prompted* data will be provided in only aggregate form.

Figure 6.11 shows that for the ESL 100 students, 83% of the *Intertextual Comments* made by *Peers* resulted in surface level changes. Only 17% resulted in any meaningful change, and they were at the *Micro Level* at that. While the *Intertextual Comments* were certainly serving a needed function, it wasn't to create meaningful change.

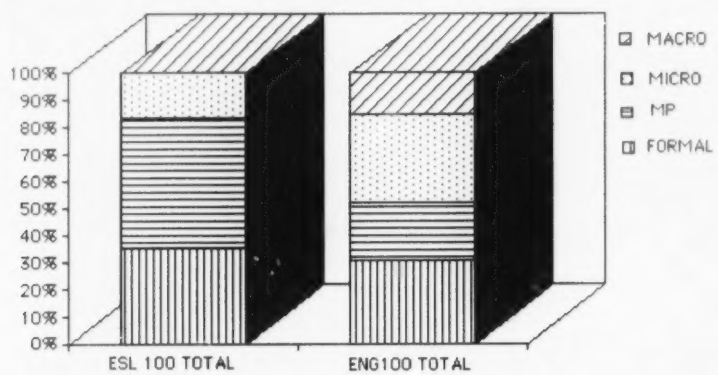


Figure 6.11
Revision Level
By Intertextual Comments

Eng 100 students had a slightly different profile. There was a much more even distribution of *Levels of*

Revision in response to *Intertextual Comments*. They were fairly evenly split between *Meaning-changing* and *Meaning-preserving* (48% to 52%). In fact, the largest single level of revision was at the *Micro Text-based Level,* where one-third of the Eng 100 subjects' revisions were classified.

The difference between the data for the *Intertextual* and ***Descant*** *Prompted* data was quite evident. For the ESL 100 students it was considerable. Fully 55% of the revisions they made in response to ***Descant*** *Prompted Comments* were at the *Macro Text-based Level* (see Figure 6.12). Another 10% were at the *Micro Level.* This type of prompting, when responded to, seemed quite effective.

For the Eng 100 students there was also a difference, though not so dramatic. Fully 60% of their revisions *In Response To* ***Descant*** *Prompts* were codified at the *Text-based Level.* The other 40% were classified *Meaning-preserving.* They had virtually no changes at the *Formal Level In Response To* ***Descant*** *Prompts:*

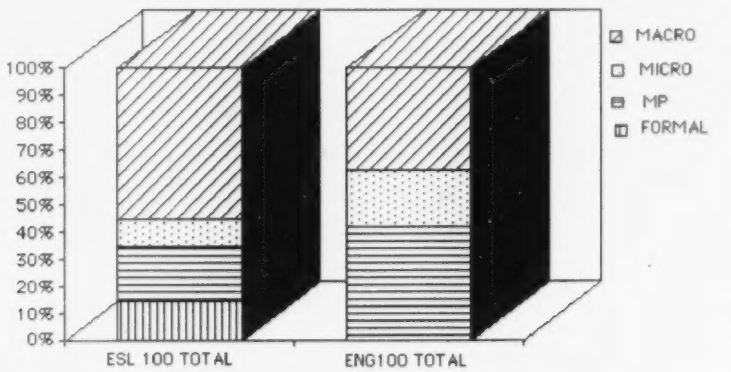


Figure 6.12
Revision Level
By Descant Prompts

An examination of subjects' revisions by *Text Operation* (Figures 6.13 & 6.14) would seem to indicate little difference either among subjects or between groups. Although each subject seemed to have a slightly different percentage of text *Added, Deleted, Replaced* and *Moved,* the relative proportions remained constant across all subjects. *Replace* and *Add* were the most common *Text Operations.* With the exception of Lupe, all subjects had a higher percentage of *Replace Text Operations* than *Add Text Operations:* Fred 48/31; Kyoko 43/42; Laura 42/36; Lupe 40/43; Connor 55/28; and Calvin 39/37. *Delete* was next, followed by a very small percentage of *Moved Text Operations:*

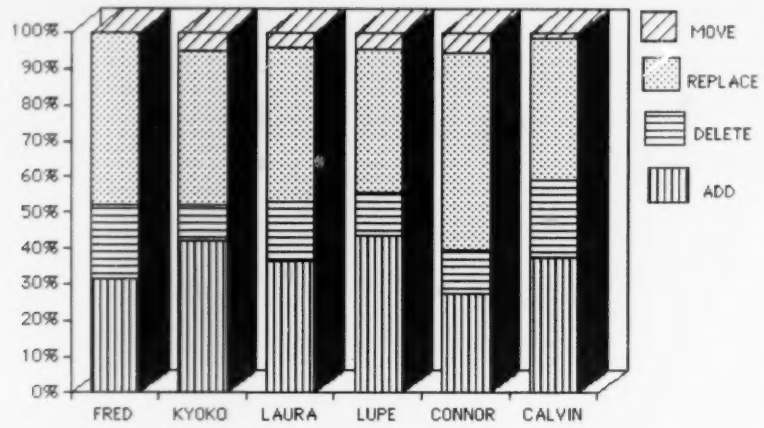


Figure 6.13
Revisions Made
By Text Operation

Because these percentages are consistent across subjects, it is no surprise that there was little difference in the aggregate numbers (see Figure 6.14). In fact, they seemed almost identical, differing by only a single percentage. ESL students *Added Text* from Draft #1 to #2 37% of the time compared to Eng 100 students who did so 38%. The ESL students *Deleted Text* 16% of the time to 15% for the Eng 100 students. The *Replace Text Operation* was done 44% of the time for ESL students, 43% for Eng 100 students. They *Moved Text* 3% and 4% respectively.

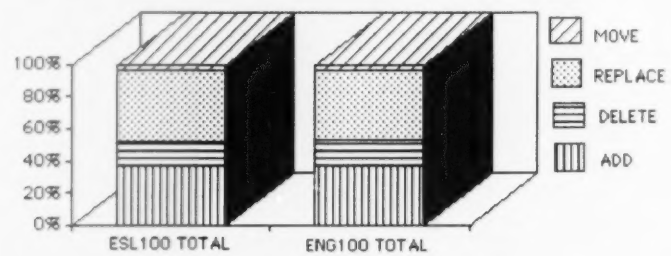


Figure 6.14
Aggregate Revisions
By Text Operation

Indeed, it would seem that there was no discernible difference in how students went about changing their texts. They all performed the same operations with relatively the same frequency. Students were most apt to either *Replace* or *Add Text;* then, they would *Delete* it and lastly *Move* it, regardless of whether English was their first or second language.

Another remarkable similarity became evident upon examination of the subjects' revisions as a function of *Level of Revision* (Figure 6.15). Although there certainly were some differences in the percentages of the various revision levels between individuals, each subject had relatively the same proportions and even the same percentages between the two major distinctions of *Meaning-changing (Micro* and *Macro)* and *Meaning-preserving (Meaning-preserving* and *Formal).* For example, Calvin had only

24% of his *Revisions* coded as *Meaning-changing;* both Fred and Lupe had 27% of their *Revisions* coded as *Meaning-changing;* Kyoko had 31% coded *Meaning-changing;* Connor had 35% coded *Meaning-changing;* and Laura was tops with 37% of her *Revisions* coded as *Meaning-changing.* There was a 13% spread over all the subjects, from 24% to 37%.

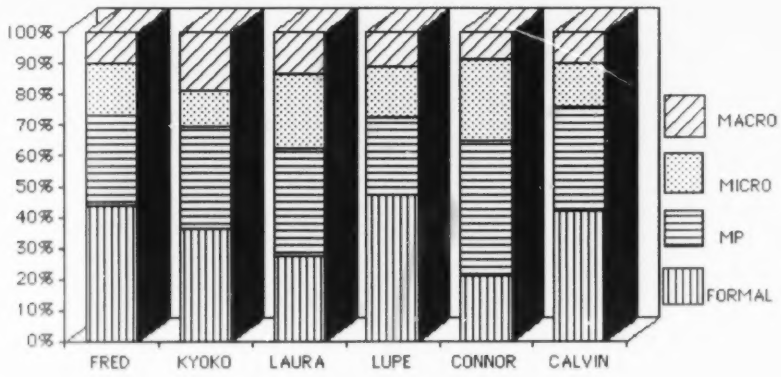


Figure 6.15
Revisions By Level

However, when the data for each group were combined, the spread for each of the levels dissipated considerably (see Figure 6.16). The ESL 100 students averaged 34% of their revisions at the *Formal Level,* as compared to 36% for the Eng 100 students. At the *Meaning-preserving Level,* the ESL 100 students averaged 33%, as compared to 34% for the Eng 100 students. At the

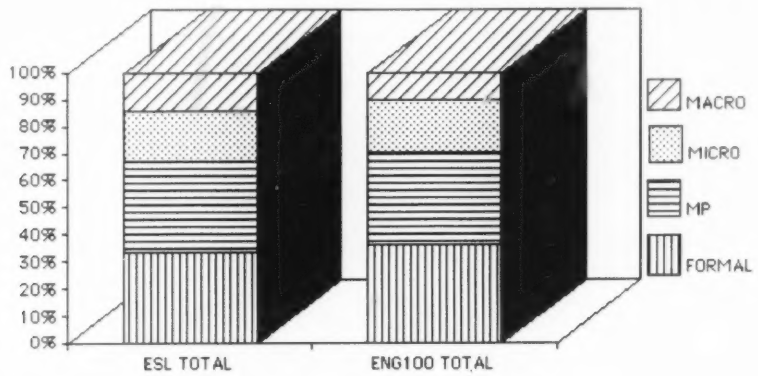


Figure 6.16
Aggregate Revisions
By Level

Micro Meaning-changing Level, the ESL 100 students averaged 19%, whereas, the Eng 100 students averaged 20%. It is only at the *Macro Meaning-changing Level* that we see any difference at all, with the ESL 100 students averaging 14% while the Eng 100 students averaged only 10%, the largest difference between the two groups.

Given these numbers, it is difficult to conclude there is much difference in the *Level of Revising*

between the two groups. In fact, it would seem that in reference to *Revision Level,* the two groups performed nearly identically. Most *Revisions* were at the *Local* or *Meaning-preserving Levels,* 67% to 70%; about one-third of all *Revisions* were *Meaning-changing,* 30% to 33% (see Figure 6.16). By taking a closer look at these data, by breaking them down according to whether the *Revisions* were *In Response, Obliquely,* or *Not In Response To Peer Comments,* a slightly different picture emerges:

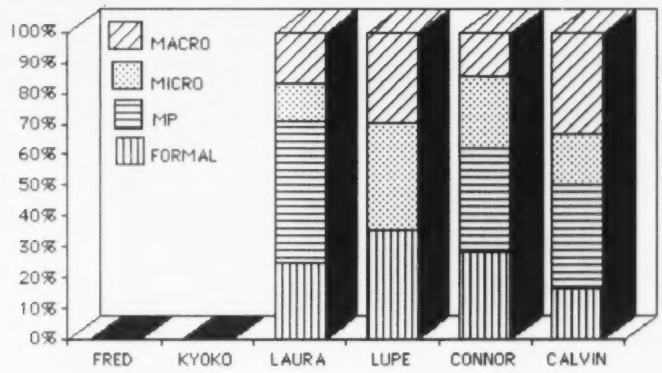


Figure 6.17
Revisions In Response
To Peer Comments By Level

The first glaring point that stands out is the fact that neither Fred nor Kyoko *Revised In Response To Peer Comments* (see Figure 6.17). Only Laura did. However, each of the Eng 100 subjects *Revised In Response.*

Because only Laura's data are included in the group data, Figure 6.18 became more a comparison of Eng 100 subjects with Laura rather than with the ESL 100 subjects. While the ESL 100 data fall decidedly in favor of non-*Text-based revising*- -71% (Figure 6.18), the Eng 100 data is split evenly between *Text-based and nonText-based Revisions*- -50%/50% (Figure 6.18)

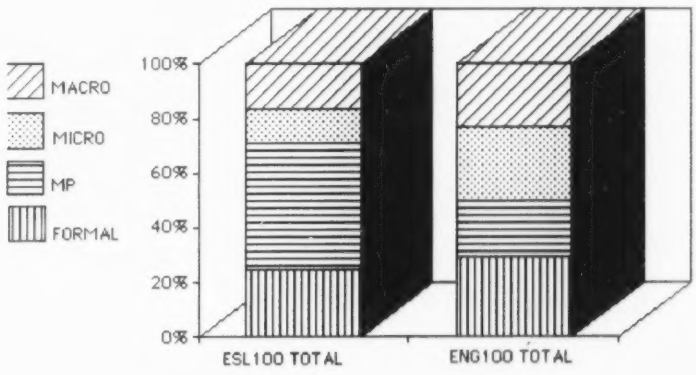


Figure 6.18
Aggregate Revisions In Response
To Peer Comments By Level

However, because of the paucity of data, it is quite impossible to draw any conclusions other than that *Laura's Revisions In Response To Peer Comments* were less apt to *Meaning-changing* than virtually any of the Eng 100 subjects--21% vs. 30%, 38% or 50%.

An examination of the *Obliquely In Response* data provided a little more substance. Although the numbers were still not those of *Not In Response*, at least everyone was represented. Here, there was great variety. Clearly 100% of *Calvin's Obliquely In Response Revisions* were at the *Macro Level* (Figure 6.19). However, he had only one revision. At the other extreme, only 21% of *Fred's Revisions* were *Text-based* (Figure 6.19). Although Kyoko and Lupe did not have *Revisions* in one category or another (*Micro* and *Formal* respectively), like Laura and Connor they had relatively distributed patterns of *Revisions Obliquely In Response* (Figure 6.19).

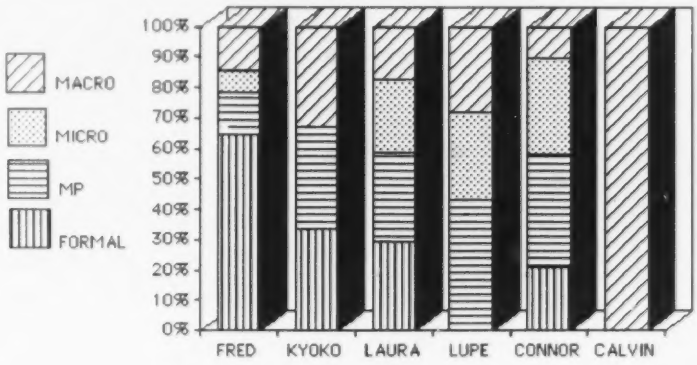


Figure 6.19
Revisions Obliquely In Response To Peer Comments By Level

A look at their grouped numbers, however, yielded something a tad more interesting. While the ESL 100 students were still more prone to *Revise* at the *non-Text-based Level* when *Obliquely In Response* --67%, the Eng 100 students were again nearly evenly split--49% *Text-based*, 51% *nonText-based* (Figure 6.20).

This would seem to indicate that when the ESL 100 students' attention was brought to a problematic area that they did not agree with, if they responded it was most likely a *Formal* correction or a *Meaning-preserving* rewording of the content. No new information was added. However, if they brought new information to the text it was most likely (2:1) to result in a significant, *Macro Text-based*, change.

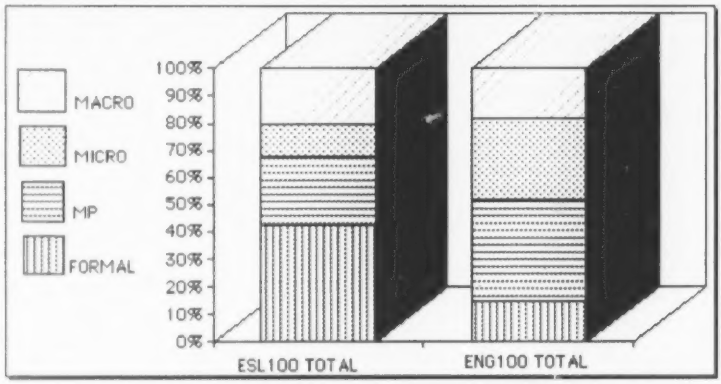


Figure 6.20
Aggregate Revisions Obliquely In Response To Peer Comments By Level

Conversely, if the Eng 100 students' focus was brought to a specific area but they did not agree with the comment, if they responded at all they were least likely to make a *Formal Level* correction. The change was most likely to result in either a *Meaning-preserving* restatement or a *Micro Text-based* change. Interestingly, if the Eng 100 students were to make a *Text-based* revision, they were less likely to make a *Macro Level* change than the ESL 100 students.

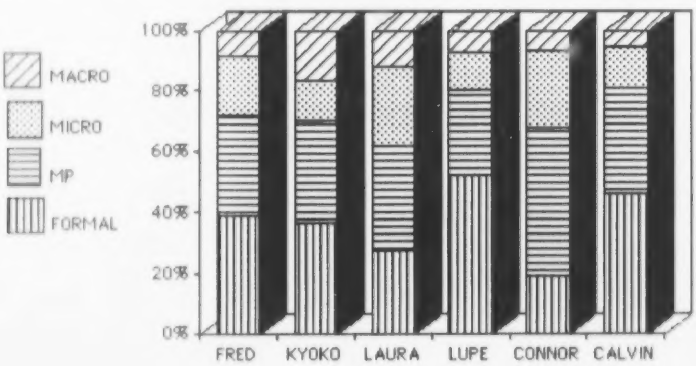


Figure 6.21
Revisions Not In Response To Peer Comments By Level

A look at the subjects' data *Not In Response To Peer Comments* (Figures 6.21 & 6.22) revealed some slightly surprising results. When left to their own devices, that is, without prompting from peers in their class, the ESL 100 subjects were much more likely to make meaningful revisions. Fully one-third (33%) of their revisions were at the *Meaning-changing Level;* whereas, only 24% of the Eng 100 subjects' revisions were *Meaning-changing* (see Figure 6.22).

This disparity in the subjects' propensity to make meaningful revisions of their own accord may, in fact, be more a result of need, or lack thereof. The two subjects who made the least meaningful revisions *Not In Response* were deemed by both faculty and peers alike to be two of the strongest writers in the class (Lupe and Calvin). Only 19% of *Calvin's Revisions* were *Text-based,* and only

20% of Lupe's were *Text-based*:

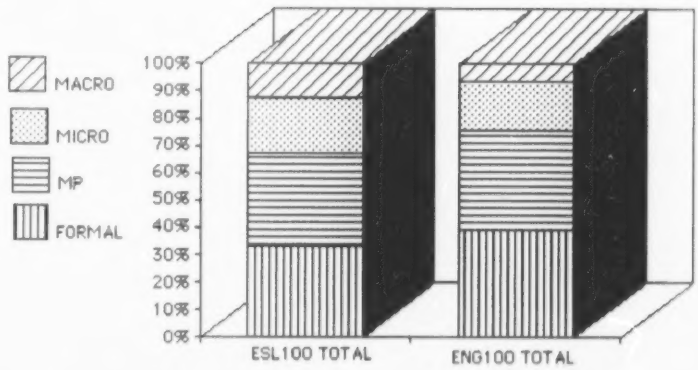
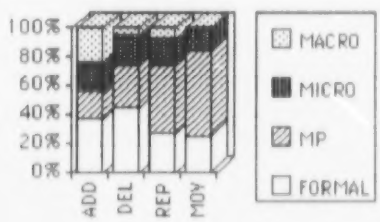


Figure 6.22
Aggregate Revisions Not In Response To Peer Comments By Level

So while it may be certainly true that according to the data Eng 100 students made a higher percentage of surface level changes of their own accord than ESL 100 students did, it may be that these particular students didn't need to make as many meaningful changes because of their greater writing proficiency.

The next four figures provide some of the more interesting views of the group data. First we examine subjects' *Text Operations* as a function of *Revision Level,* then turn the data around to see *Revision Levels* as a function of *Text Operation.*

The first feature that stands out when examining these two groups is the remarkable similarity in their *Text Operation/Revision Level* profiles. Although the percentages may be off 5-10% on some comparisons (e.g., *Added Micro-* -Figures 6.23 & 6.24), overall the percentages and profiles look quite similar. Consider these comparisons (ESL/Eng) on *Text-based* changes: *Add*--44/42%; *Delete*--26/13%; *Replace*--26/22%; and *Move*--17/20% (see Figures 6.23 & 6.24). Except for the *Delete Operation,* the other *Text Operations* were within 4% points of each other. So although finer discriminations (i.e., at the *Formal, Meaning-preserving, Micro, Macro Levels)* might have suggested a slight difference between the two groups, the coarser meaningful/not meaningful change discrimination showed little difference:



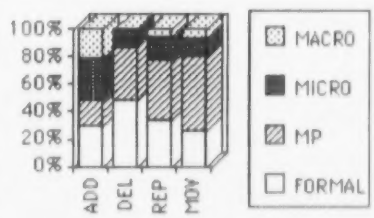


Figure 6.23
ESL 100
Text Operations By Level

Figure 6.24
Eng 100
Text Operations By Level

Other similarities worthy of note alluded to earlier in the subjects' descriptions in Chapters 4 & 5, are the propensities for certain *Text Operations* to result in certain level changes. For example, according to Figures 6.23 & 6.24, for both groups *Added Text Revisions* were more likely to result in *Text-based* changes than any other *Text Operation* (ESL 100--44%; Eng 100--52%). Whereas, for both groups the *Delete* and *Move Text Revisions* were least likely to result in *Text-based* changes (ESL 100--26%, 17%; Eng 100--13%, 20% respectively). In fact, *Deleted Text* was most likely to result in a *Formal Level* change. That is, subjects deleted text usually to make some grammatical/ mechanical or spelling correction.

Turning the data around, while yielding new insights, also reinforces the similarities in the two groups' profiles (see Figures 6.25 & 6.26). First, *Macro Text-based* changes were most likely to be the result of *Added Text:* ESL 100--67%; Eng 100--73% (see Figures 6.25 & 6.26). That is, when students *Added Text,* they created meaningful change, an observation most writing instructors would intuit as valid. Second, *Meaning-preserving Level* changes were most likely to be the result of *Replaced Text:* ESL 100--60%; Eng 100--59% (see Figures 6.25 & 6.26). That is, to maintain the same meaning but try to say it in a better way, students replaced one word or expression with another, again a point with which most teachers would agree:

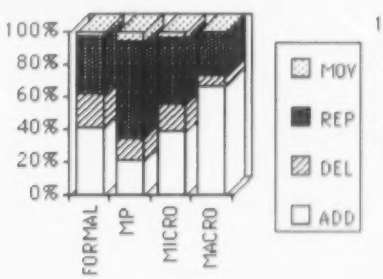


Figure 6.25
ESL 100
Revision Levels by Text Operation

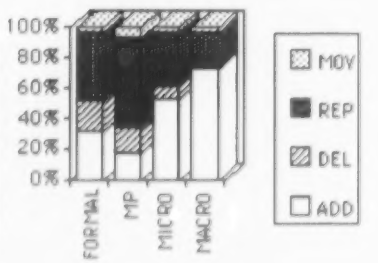


Figure 6.26
Eng 100
Revision Levels by Text Operation

CONCLUSION

Besides highlighting individual differences in revising patterns, this chapter has served to explore several features that these two groups appear to have in common and to examine areas where they differ. In summary, the ESL 100 students had a higher percentage of revised T-units, increased words, and increase in words/T-unit. They also made no revisions based on *Peer Comments* that were corrective in nature; conversely, the Eng 100 students responded to a greater variety of *Peer Comment Types.*

Surprisingly, the two groups are more similar than one might have thought, based on some of our working assumptions about ESL students. They had similar increases in T-unit percentages. *Revisions In Response to Descant Prompts* tended to be more at the *Text-based Level* while those comments inserted Intertextually were more apt to be *Surface Level.* Their *Text Operations and Revision Level* ratios and correlations were relatively the same. *Added Text* usually meant a *Text-based* change for both groups. *Deleted Text* usually meant a *Formal* change for both groups. Finally, most *Meaning-preserving Level* changes were accomplished through the *Replace Text Operation.*

While the limitations of generalizing from such a multiple-case study cannot be ignored or underplayed, some attempt has been made to put these findings in a broader picture.

IMPLICATIONS

These results lend themselves to a few pedagogical implications right away. First, because comments made at the beginning of the semester seemed to have the potential for a greater impact than those made later, it seems imperative that a course of this nature be front loaded. That is, all the training, bonding, negotiating of ground rules, and so on need to be taken care of at the beginning of the course rather than distributed througout the course. Second, because students tended to respond better to questions and comments rather than specific suggestions, students need to be trained in the fine art of providing peer feedback. Third, global type comments and questions should be stressed over local corrective suggestions. If students have the opportunity to provide feedback more than once, the first time should be reserved for global comments while the second time allowing more local comments. Don't allow students to insert comments within peers' texts at first. And fourth, grammar/style checkers can have a positive influence on students' ability to focus on possible problem areas. Although the programs may not be accurate in their comments, they may force students to take a second look at their writing.